
April 30, 2001

Alaska Regional Training Centers

Solicitation of Interest



Timeline

April 23, 2001 – July 15, 2001

Submit Applications to:

Alaska Workforce Investment Office
Employment Security Division
Department of Labor and Workforce Development
State of Alaska
3301 Eagle Street, Suite 106
Anchorage, AK 99503-4188

Inquiries or Questions to:

Mike Lohmann @ (907) 269-4655
Email: mike_lohmann@labor.state.ak.us

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Alaska Regional Training Centers Solicitation of Interest

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Alaska Regional Training Centers Solicitation of Interest

I. Purpose

As a result of education conferences held around the state with Senator Ted Stevens, the State Commissioner of Education, and local educators it became evident that Alaska needed a comprehensive, statewide plan for vocational and technical education and training for grades nine (9) through fourteen (14). The document "*Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint*" was developed in response to that need. In light of the upcoming debate on President Bush's education proposal and very limited amount of funding available to address Alaska's needs in this area, a priority list of projects that meet Alaska's vocational and technical education and training needs is needed. To that end, the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council (AHRIC) is soliciting proposals of interest on the behalf of Senator Ted Stevens to guide decisions related to Regional Training programs in Alaska.

The Alaska Workforce Investment Office (AWIO), Department of Labor and Workforce Development, in coordination with the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council (AHRIC) is soliciting proposals of interest on the behalf of Senator Ted Stevens to provide Regional Training Centers in Alaska. A regional training center is defined as an institution that provides integrated vocational and work readiness skills training at the 9 through 14 grade levels to trainees who may originate from communities co-located within a broad geographic region of the state.

At the present time, there are no funds specifically designated for the construction, operation and maintenance of new regional training centers. This solicitation is solely to gauge interest in and assess the need for regional training centers. No funds will be awarded by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to proposals submitted in response to this solicitation.

Any proposals submitted will be reviewed and evaluated by members of the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council. The evaluations will be made in accordance with the criteria specified in this solicitation and the proposals will be ranked from highest scoring to lowest. All proposals and the evaluations will then be provided to Senator Steven's office for review and consideration. Should Senator Stevens, Congress and the President deem one or more of the proposals to have merit, appropriations may be made or funds may be earmarked for regional training center(s).

This Solicitation of Interest does not in any way, express or implied, commit the State of Alaska, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and Senator Stevens to make funding available to any respondents to this solicitation.

II. Issuing Office

All inquires related to this request should be submitted in writing to:

Alaska Regional Training Centers Solicitation of Interest

Alaska Workforce Investment Office
Employment Security Division
Department of Labor and Workforce Development
State of Alaska
3301 Eagle Street, Suite 106
Anchorage, AK 99503-4188

ATTN.: Mike Lohmann
Telephone: (907) 269-4655
Fax: (907) 269-4661
Email: mike_lohmann@labor.state.ak.us

III. Proposal of Interest Deadlines

Date of Issue April 23, 2001

Inquiry Deadline June 15, 2001

Interested parties shall carefully review this solicitation for defects and questionable or objectionable materials. Comments concerning defects and questionable or objectionable material must be made in writing to the issuing office no later than 5:00 p.m. Alaska Prevailing Time on June 15, 2001. If an amendment is issued, all solicitations will receive a copy and deadlines will be adjusted if necessary.

Proposal Submission Deadline July 13, 2001

To be considered, respondents must submit proposals of interest in response to this solicitation in the format specified in Section IX of this solicitation and must include a signed original and three (3) copies. Proposals must be received in the Issuing Office not later than 5:00 p.m. Alaska Prevailing Time (APT) on July 13, 2001. Proposals may be hand delivered to the Issuing Office or may be mailed. If mailed, the applications must be received in the Issuing Office, not postmarked, by the submission deadline. Proposals of interest received after this time will receive no consideration. Neither faxed nor electronic copies of proposals of interest will receive consideration.

Assistance to Respondents with a Disability

The AWIO and the AHRIC comply with the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, and/or special modifications to participate in this solicitation should contact the *Issuing Office* at one of the following numbers no later than 5:00 p.m. APT on May 15, 2001 to make any necessary arrangements.

Telephone: (907) 269-4655

Alaska Regional Training Centers Solicitation of Interest

Fax: (907) 269-4661
Email: mike_lohmann@labor.state.ak.us

Questions Received Prior to the Opening of Proposals of Interest

Inquiries and comments may be directed, in writing, to Mr. Mike Lohmann, Grants Administrator, at the Issuing Office address previously noted. Alternatively, inquiries may be faxed to (907) 269-4661. Inquiries may also be sent via electronic mail if the sender is clearly identified. E-mail address for inquiries is: mike_lohmann@labor.state.ak.us. Inquiries and comments should not be made by telephone.

Responses to questions and inquiries will be provided, in writing, to all recipients of this Solicitation of Interest.

Alternate Proposals

Respondents may submit only one proposal of interest for evaluation.

Disputes

Any dispute arising out of this solicitation will be resolved under the laws of Alaska. Any appeal of an administrative order or any original action to enforce any provision of this solicitation or to obtain relief from or remedy in connection with this solicitation may be brought only in the superior court for the First Judicial District of Alaska.

IV. Background

Alaska is experiencing critical workforce, community and economic development challenges. This is evidenced by the combination in many regional economies of labor surpluses and the inability of businesses and industry to fill high-skill jobs with qualified Alaskans. Education and training programs available to address these challenges are too often seriously fragmented and under-funded. Immediate and decisive action is needed to align publicly supported education and training efforts with labor market needs, close skills gaps, and position Alaskans for employment in good jobs statewide, especially in projected “hot occupations” with higher than average growth rates and estimated wages.

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Employment Services Division, Alaska Workforce Investment Office in partnership with the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council (AHRIC) (hereinafter “Department”) is soliciting proposals of interest for the creation of regional vocational training centers to address these community and economic development challenges. Proposals of interest should attempt to increase rural participation in vocational and technical training programs and to provide more training opportunities to Alaskans.

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The AHRIC was chartered to facilitate the process necessary to create and maintain an efficient, effective, and integrated human resource investment system. The council is appointed by the Governor, and includes Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer and four commissioners: Ed Flanagan of Labor & Workforce Development, Deborah Sedwick of Community & Economic Development, Shirley Holloway of Education & Early Development and Karen Perdue of Health and Social Services. Other members represent business and labor organizations, Native organizations, educational institutions and employment service providers. A majority of the council membership is from the private sector.

One of the AHRIC's key missions is to serve as the state's primary planning and coordinating entity for vocational and technical education. Towards that end, the AHRIC was mandated to:

“facilitate the development of a statewide policy for a coordinated and effective technical and vocational education training system in this state and, to the extent authorized by federal and State law, plan and coordinate federal, State, and local efforts in technical and vocational education programs.”

The AHRIC has worked with key industries in Alaska to determine their workforce needs, and to bring industry employers together with training providers to customize training for their particular industry. The AHRIC convened industry groups to focus on workforce demand and supply through Industry Needs Assessments to determine current and future workforce needs for specific high wage and high demand occupations, and identify gaps in the State and local capacity to meet industry training needs.

In an effort to establish a system for these industry groups, known as Business Learning Consortia, the AHRIC worked with the University of Alaska Corporate Programs to develop a best practice approach for demonstrations and models that can be replicated by other industries. Efforts to establish Business Learning Consortia have been extensive and successful. The "best practices" approach developed with the University's assistance will help to guide efforts of future consortia, and ultimately develop the best trained workforce for Alaska. To learn more about Business Learning Consortia consult the AHRIC's publication *“Business Learning Consortia In Alaska - Strengthening the Involvement of Business and Industry In Developing Alaska's Workforce”*.

The AHRIC's *“Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint”* outlines the framework for strengthening vocational and technical education and training statewide. Adopted by the AHRIC on December 12, 2000, the *blueprint* serves as the comprehensive guide for alignment of public policies and resource investments in early childhood education — 12 and post-secondary vocational and technical education and training programs statewide.

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The *Blueprint* was developed with the benefit of initial consultations and extensive feedback from diverse stakeholders statewide. Overall there has been strong, positive support for the strategic policies and investments addressed in the *Blueprint*. However, there is overriding concern to strengthen efforts at providing Alaskans increased vocational and technical education and training opportunities. Resolution of this fundamental issue will require continuing consultation between key stakeholders and State and federal administration and legislature.

Senator Stevens has expressed an interest in supporting the development of Alaska's Vocational and Technical Education System. To the extent practical, he is looking to support training centers across the state that provide unique training opportunities in Alaska's growth industries that are not currently reasonably available to interested Alaskans.

The AHRIC, on behalf of Senator Stevens, will be the review body responsible for evaluating proposals of interest, consistent with the Workforce Development System, as described in the *blueprint*, for public investment in new or existing post-secondary regional training centers.

V. Scope of Services Required

The focus of solicited regional training center proposals of interest is to provide training and education at the nine (9) through fourteen (14) grade level. The target population is youth and adults in need of training and education services leading to employment. Training should focus on but not be limited to:

- ◆ Preparatory to continuing secondary education (remedial education)
- ◆ Work readiness skills
- ◆ Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- ◆ Occupation specific training which focuses on no more than three (3) high wage, growth industries at each regional training center.
- ◆ Proposals must align with the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council's "*Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint*" (Appendix A) and its accompanying recommendations.
- ◆ Proposals must align with the Department of Education and Early Development's "*Post-secondary Career and Technical Educational Program Standards*" (Appendix B).

Eligible entities include any non-profit or for-profit organization, business, or government agency licensed or recognized to conduct a business within Alaska that possess the

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capacity to provide or facilitate a regional training center described in this solicitation of interest.

Proposed Regional Training Center must meet six criteria:

Criterion 1: Program operations are consistent with statewide training policies outlined in *Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint*, *State Unified Plan — June 2000 to June 2005*, *State Training and Employment Plan*, and the *Carl D. Perkins Plan*.

Criterion 2: Curriculum leads progressively to, or results in, the attainment of nationally recognized, industry-based skill standards and occupational certifications.

Criterion 3: As appropriate, post-secondary programs meet all standards for authorization by the Alaska Commission on Post-secondary Education.

Criterion 4: Sustainable demand is evidenced by: (a) sufficient local, regional or state population base from which to draw a viable pool of trainees, and (b) direct correlation between the types of training to be offered and documented local and state labor market needs/employer partnerships.

Criterion 5: Any proposed training facility or center will: (a) serve multi-purpose facility needs and maximize use of existing infrastructure, (b) utilize a small permanent staff of certified instructors which can be supplemented by sharing staff with other programs, (c) be located in a community that can accommodate the full range of trainees' housing, transportation and other support needs, and (d) encourage alignment with secondary education entities.

Criterion 6: On-going program and facility operations and maintenance are financially viable and sustainable as evidenced by concrete revenue streams.

VI. Proposals of Interest

To be considered, respondents must submit a complete response to this solicitation, using the format provided in section IX. Proposal of interest narrative must explain how the respondent will provide the services requested through this solicitation and who specifically assumes responsibility for each work requirement. Responses in this section would be viewed as an opportunity to demonstrate the respondent's applicable experience and ability to complete the required work and reporting requirements. All information presented in this solicitation of interest package should be factual and respond to the solicitation's specifications. All proposals must address the following:

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- **Regional Training Center:** proposals must address how the training center will increase rural participation in vocational and technical training programs and provide more training opportunities to rural Alaskans.
- **Unique Training Centers:** proposals must address what unique training opportunities in Alaska's growth industries are not currently reasonably available to interested Alaskans.
- **Duplicate Training Center:** proposals must address how other training centers in the region do not provide the appropriate training requested in this proposal.
- **Training Center not currently available to residents:** proposals must address why this training center is needed and important to the region and why participants cannot receive the training at a nearby facility.
- **Resolutions:** Every City/Borough/Non-Profit applicant for funding must submit a resolution, motion, or similar action granting authority to participate in the program. The resolution must also establish signatory authority to an appropriate official to conduct normal and usual business regarding the proposal of interest. Tribal applicants must submit a resolution, which includes a Waiver of Sovereign Immunity from legal prosecution by the State for claims that which may arise from the utilization of a grant that might result from this solicitation.
- **Community Support:** proposals must demonstrate community support and consensus. This support must be demonstrated on a regional basis including support from all the surrounding communities that the Regional Training Center will serve. This may be established by letters of support, assurances from local governments and employers involved in the proposals.
- **Site Control:** proposals requesting funding for real property must document that they have the legal right to use the real property. This documentation may be in the form of a deed, lease (usually for not less than twenty years), easement, or similar formally executed document.
- **Facility already in place:** proposals must address if there is already a facility in place in the region that could be used for the Regional Training Center rather than building a new facility. The proposal should also address ownership of the facility and how the respondent will achieve access if the respondent does not own the facility.
- **Funding:** funds will be targeted toward projects that demonstrate that adequate funding to complete the Regional Training Center will be both available and documented. The proposal should fully describe any additional sources of funds

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that are available for the center's construction and/or operation. Address all other funding sources and identify if match in kind contributions will be available.

- **Budget:** proposals must include a detailed budget with a complete budget narrative. The budget narrative must describe what exactly the funds will be paying for and how much each component will cost.
- **Timeline:** proposals must address a timeline from start to completion. Timeline should address the plan for completion and an opening date for the Regional Training Center to begin operation.
- **Operation and Maintenance:** proposals must address how the community or region plans on maintaining the facility once completed. All facilities must have an operation and maintenance plan to show that the community has the finances to run the facility and keep it in good working order. Anticipated sources of revenues and expected costs should be specified for the center's first three years of operation.
- **Qualifications and Experience of the Respondent:** Provide information that demonstrates the respondent's experience in providing similar training services. Resumes of key personnel involved in the project should be provided.

VII. Proposal of Interest Evaluation and Selection

Proposals of interest will be evaluated and scored by the AHRIC according to the following evaluation criteria and awards will be made contingent upon receipt of federal and/or State funds.

- **Regional Training Center Description, Design and Results - 40 Points**

Complete, clear and adequate description of the overall proposed regional training center. Description of the activities that will be undertaken and accomplished. Feasibility and durability of the proposal. All issues outlined in section VI must be adequately addressed. Direct contribution to workforce capacity building. Demonstration of community support and consensus.

- **Budget and Budget Narrative - 25 Points**

Reasonableness of proposed costs relative to the activities proposed. Allowability of costs and expenses. Explanation provided of how costs were derived. Other funds or in-kind included as match. Proposals that show a local commitment or other funding sources will be more favorably assessed.

- **Organization Qualifications - 25 Points**

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Training experience. Staff knowledgeable concerning relevant industry standards, certifications, or areas of specific needs including local needs. Familiarity with specific training for local residents to be employed. Satisfactory financial management and administrative capacity. Success with prior training projects.

➤ Impact - 10 points

How will the Regional Training Center address the community and economic development challenges. How will it increase rural participation in vocational and technical training programs and provide more training opportunities to Alaskans.

VIII. Limitations

1.0 This Solicitation of Interest does not in any way commit the State of Alaska, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and Senator Ted Stevens to reimburse recipients of this Solicitation for any of the costs of preparing and submitting a Proposal for a Regional Training Center. Any such costs must be paid by the respondent and will not be reimbursed should an award of financial assistance result from this solicitation.

The State of Alaska, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, shall not be subject to payment for any costs incurred as a result of a termination of this solicitation.

2.0 This Solicitation of Interest does not obligate the State of Alaska, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and Senator Stevens to accept, or contract for, any services expressed or implied.

3.0 The State of Alaska, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, reserves the right to:

a) Request any respondent submitting a proposal to clarify its response or to supply any additional material deemed necessary to assist in the evaluation of the proposals.

b) Modify or otherwise alter any or all of the requirements herein. In the event of any modifications, all entities that submitted proposals will be given an equal opportunity to modify their responses in the specific areas that are impacted.

c) Reject any or all responses received and to waive formality in solicitation procedures. A proposal may be rejected when (1) the proposal is not signed; (2) the respondent has failed to use the proposal format; (3) the respondent makes a material change in the specifications of the Solicitation; (4) there is a conflict of interest; (5) the proposal is received after the deadline for receipt of proposals; and, (6) the respondent has

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been debarred or suspended by the State or the Federal government. The State reserves the right to reject all proposals at any time, when it is not in the best interests of the State to proceed with the solicitation.

4.0 Acceptance of Proposal Content. The contents of the respondent's proposal may become contractual obligations if a financial assistance award ensues. It shall not, however, be considered the total binding obligation. Those conditions shall be included in a final negotiated and approved financial assistance agreement. Failure of a respondent to accept those obligations may result in cancellation of the award.

5.0 Additional Terms and Conditions. Additional terms and conditions may be required by federal grantor agencies during the process of award negotiations. These terms and conditions may be beyond those specified in this Solicitation of Interest.

6.0 Ownership of Documents. All designs, drawings, specifications, notes, and other documents provided in a proposal submitted in response to this Solicitation of Interest become the property of the State of Alaska, and may be used by the State for any other purpose.

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IX. Proposal of Interest Submission Format

Organization _____
Mailing Address _____
Contact Person/Title _____
Telephone/Fax Numbers _____
E-mail Address _____
Business License/IRS I.D. # _____

✓ Type of Business/Organization

_____ Private For-profit	_____ Public Education
_____ Private Non-profit	_____ Government
_____ Private Education	_____ Other: (please specify)
_____ Organized Labor	_____

✓ Criterion for Regional Training Centers:

_____ **Criterion 1:** Program operations are consistent with statewide training policies.

_____ **Criterion 2:** Curriculum leads progressively to, or results in, the attainment of nationally recognized, industry-based skill standards and occupational certifications.

_____ **Criterion 3:** As appropriate, post-secondary programs meet all standards for authorization by the Alaska Commission on Post-secondary Education.

_____ **Criterion 4:** Sustainable demand is evidenced by: (a) sufficient local, regional or State population base from which to draw a viable pool of trainees, and (b) direct correlation between the types of training to be offered and documented local and State labor market needs/employer partnerships.

_____ **Criterion 5:** Any proposed training facility or center will: (a) serve multi-purpose facility needs and maximize use of existing infrastructure, (b) utilize a small permanent staff of certified instructors which can be supplemented by sharing staff with other programs, (c) be located in a community that can accommodate the full range of trainees' housing, transportation and other support needs, and (d) encourage alignment with secondary education entities.

_____ **Criterion 6:** On-going program and facility operations and maintenance are financially viable and sustainable as evidenced by concrete revenue streams.

Certification

I have received and understood the terms, conditions, and procedures of this solicitation of interest and agree to meet any Federal and State requirements if selected for funding. I certify that all information contained in this application is true and accurate and understand that falsification of information may be cause for application non-review or award revocation. I further certify that the proposed program design and costs shall remain valid until at least June 30, 2002.

Authorized Signature Date

Printed Name and Official Title

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PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION, DESIGN AND RESULTS

Describe the specific regional training facility, training activities, and the timeframe for completion if construction of new infrastructure is required. Describe how this proposal of interest is related to another, if any, State or federal capacity building or training project. Describe if the proposal will directly contribute to the operation and/or maintenance of rural infrastructure. Address community support and where employment opportunities will occur. Address the impact the Regional Training Center will provide including all areas addressed in section VI.

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REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER BUDGET AND NARRATIVE

Line Item Budget

Cost Category	Grant Request	Other Funds	Project Total
Personal Services			
Travel			
Contractual			
Supplies			
Equipment			
Facilities			
Administration			
Other			
TOTALS			

Budget Narrative

Provide a detailed description of how funds will be used and how the amounts were determined. Also, describe the source and amount of other funds, if any, that will be contributed to the project.

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ORGANIZATION QUALIFICATIONS

Describe your organization and previous experience in provision of employment training services. Identify individual(s) who will be responsible for the project management and grants administration. Describe the qualifications and experience of the person or persons who will be conducting the training. If the individuals are not employees of the applicant, describe the relationship with the training staff organization. Identify any contractors or sub-contractors that will be working on the project. Provide detailed information on the specific measurements that will be taken to assess the outcomes and success of the project.

Business Learning Consortia In Alaska

Strengthening the Involvement of Business and Industry
In Developing Alaska's Workforce



March 5, 2000

Alice Galvin, Chair
Alaska Human Resource Investment Council
Department of Labor & Workforce Development
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1830
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 269-7485
(907) 269-7489 - fax
www.labor.state.ak.us/commish/ahric/home.htm

Strengthening the involvement of business and industry in developing Alaska's workforce.

The Alaska Human Resource Investment Council has worked with key industries in Alaska to determine their workforce needs, and to bring industry employers together with training providers to customize training for their particular industry. The AHRIC convened industry groups to focus on workforce demand and supply through Industry Needs Assessments to determine current and future workforce needs for specific high wage and high demand occupations, and identify gaps in the state and local capacity to meet industry training needs. Early efforts focused on the Health industry, which convened their own Workforce Development group. An industry group composed of oil, gas, mining and utility "process" industries convened using a model from Texas oil processors. Both industry groups have worked successfully with the University of Alaska and other training providers to customize training for their industries. Other industry groups have followed examples set by the health and process industries. In an effort to establish a system for these industry groups, known as Business Learning Consortia, the AHRIC worked with the University of Alaska Corporate Programs to develop a best practice approach for demonstrations and models that can be replicated by other industries. A brief description of each industry group and their stage of development follows.

Health Care Industry

Efforts by the AHRIC related to workforce demand and training capacity for the health care industry continue. AHRIC staff has provided technical assistance to the Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association and their Education Committee to further develop their Business Learning Consortium. ASHNHA has hired staff support for workforce development initiatives on behalf of the newly created consortium.

As a result of AHRIC's Industry Needs Assessment, the University of Alaska has shifted resources to direct more focus on health career training and education. The UA School of Nursing began offering an Associate Degree of Nursing (RN) in Fairbanks and Kodiak in the Fall of 2000 and is exploring other initiatives to expand nursing education statewide. The Allied Health program has expanded to provide four new occupational certifications.

ASHNHA is currently working closely with UAA Allied Health in developing a distance delivered Radiology training program.

For more information go to the following web site: www.ashnha.com, or email Judy Nyman at Judy@ashnha.org.

Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium

In August 1999, the oil and gas industry joined with the mining industry, the power generation industry, education, government, labor and community partners to start the Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium (APICC).

The purpose of APICC is to:

- ♦ Assess workforce needs and gaps,
- ♦ Define industry-based skill standards,

- ♦ Develop and enhance curriculum (K-16) to meet industry needs, and
- ♦ Promote pathways to careers for Alaskans in the process industry.

Process operators in all industries have been identified as the highest need. A skills assessment for process operators has been completed defining the core skill standards for the industry. As a result of APICC's efforts, the University of Alaska now offers a two-year Associate of Applied Science at Anchorage, Fairbanks and Kenai campuses, which began in January 2000. The courses are aimed at training new workers to operate modern computerized systems, and to replace retiring Alaska process industry workers. The skills will apply to mining and utilities, in addition to oil and gas industries.

In 1999, AHRIC staff assisted the Health Care and Processing Industries with a successful application to the US DOL for expanded consortium building, planning and needs assessments. The USDOL grant is helping develop a sustainable system for forecasting industry demand.

APICC has formed a K-12 Connections Committee that met with interested school districts and others at the Career Pathways Institute. APICC industry members will be partnered with a number of Alaska School Districts implementing Industrial and Engineering Career Pathways. AHRIC members and committees are directly involved.

In cooperation with the Alaska Native Coalition for Education and Training and other rural organizations, APICC is trying to bring more Alaska Natives into the industry. Using data developed by Research and Analysis (AkDOLWD) APICC has identified high paying jobs that require one to two years of training/education. There is a high correlation between the construction and craft skills of APICC and the construction industry. Joint efforts are being explored between APICC and labor organizations. The proposed gas pipeline in Alaska will create a high, short-term demand for construction and crafts workers. With a start estimated at 2004, there is time to plan and develop the necessary workforce.

For more information, go to the following web site: www.apicc.org

Alaska High Tech Business Council/Information Technology Careers Consortium

Technology companies in Alaska have expressed difficulty in hiring qualified workers, and the Information Technology Association of America has cited high, unfilled demand for high-tech jobs. Responding to this need, the Alaska Science and Technology Foundation has teamed with AHRIC, the University of Alaska, Alaska Vocational Technical Center and private training providers in developing the Information Technology Careers Consortium (ITCC).

ITCC has developed a fellowship program that provides a \$10,000 grant to an individual who must be matched with an employer, aimed at individuals new to IT. ITCC has also established an internship, which places new entrants in learning positions with employers to introduce them to the industry.

The ITCC has a K-12 Committee, which has drafted an Information Technology Career Pathway curriculum, working with the Matanuska-Susitna School District.

The ITCC is working with the Anchorage/Mat-Su Workforce Investment Board and the University developing the training and education to be delivered under a USDOL grant to train IT workers. The program will be first delivered in Mat-Su, then Anchorage and develops a model that can be taken statewide. It includes a K-12 component that provides certifications and prepares high school students to enter the field. For more information, go to the following web site: www.ahthbc.org.

Transportation Industry

A Transportation Industry Workforce Forum was held November 4, 1999 in Anchorage where some 150 people heard representatives from the air, marine, land, and rail transportation sectors discuss the workforce issues they face, including a shortage of workers at all skill levels. Training providers reported on their current programs, and discussed the need to improve skill development and employee retention in the transportation industry. The Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research & Analysis Section reported on trends in the Transportation industry, as detailed in their November 1999 issue of *Alaska Economic Trends* magazine, a monthly publication of the Department. This publication is available at the following web site: www.labor.state.ak.us/research/research.htm.

Following the forum, an existing industry coalition has joined with AHRIC staff and Council members to develop a transportation industry Business Learning Consortium. The group held a highly successful Jobs Fair, attended by hundreds of job seekers. Several industry representatives took some 150 applications from job seekers at the one-day event. An industry steering committee has been formed to direct the next Alaska Transportation Career Fair, which is set for March 17, 2001.

Construction

The Associated General Contractors of Alaska has been active in workforce development. With funding from the Denali Commission, a federal/state commission established to improve employment and infrastructure in rural Alaska, AGC is introducing the "BuildUp" career pathway for construction trades in elementary schools. Middle school and high school programs are scheduled to come on line. The construction industry and the APICC members share many of the same occupations and requirements for workers. Contact Vicki Schneibel at: vicki@agcak.org.

Alaska Hotel and Hospitality Alliance

This is a joint operation between the hotel/motel and restaurant owners/operators. Their Education Committee is working with some local school districts. In the Matanuska-Susitna School District, they are using the "Pro Start" program in K-12 education. The group is also working with the Hutchison Center in Fairbanks on a travel and lodging management program.

The Education Committee would like to identify funding for a director that would allow them to expand their involvement in school-based programs. They are acquainting students with the industry by involving high school students with internships, site visits, etc. They hope to prepare students for entry level and management positions in the field. Contact Gene Sheehan at: eesheehan@aol.com

Seafood Industry Human Resources Consortium

This group originally organized to expand the industry's Alaska hiring for work in seafood processing plants. That issue has resolved and more Alaskans are ready and willing to work in processing plants throughout the state. The group has recently revitalized itself. Now SIHRC is focusing its efforts at the K-12 level in hopes of attracting young Alaskans to the industry, not particularly for processing work, but for the more professional occupations available in the industry. Contact Art Nelson at: anelson@atsea.org

University of Alaska Business Learning Consortia System Building

The AHRIC has identified several industries in Alaska that would benefit from Business Learning Consortia to meet their industry's workforce development needs, as described above. As part of a USDOL Incumbent Worker planning grant, the AHRIC entered into an agreement with the University of Alaska Corporate Programs, requesting them to assist and develop Business Learning Consortia for select industries in the following ways:

- Assist each of the consortia in organizing their structure and projects,
- Assist each consortium with an information network to its members and interested parties,
- Document the development of each consortium, including history, by-laws, articles of incorporation, meeting minutes, committee actions, programs implemented, participation, and other information necessary to demonstrate the varied approaches taken, and
- Prepare a complete report documenting the "best practices" identified during the course of the project.

Efforts to establish Business Learning Consortia have been extensive and successful. The "best practices" approach developed with the University's assistance will help to guide efforts of future consortia, and ultimately develop the best trained workforce for Alaska.

Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Program Standards

A. People

1. Mission/Goals/Philosophy

- 1) There is a clear mission and philosophy statement that includes and specifies the purpose of postsecondary career and technical education programs.

2. Organizational Structure

- 1) The organization has a structure that clearly delineates authority, responsibility, roles, and relationships of advisory committees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

3. Students

- 1) Students are provided on-going guidance and advising so their individual needs are met; support services are made available to all students; appropriate accommodations are made for students with special needs; appropriate measures are taken to ensure equal opportunities for all students.

4. Faculty

- 1) Faculty have experience and training in the area they are teaching; the faculty are appropriately credentialed for teaching assignments; the faculty commit to, and are supported in, continuing professional development; the faculty support and supervise students in acceptable ratios; to the extent possible, the faculty represent the diversity of the state.
- 2) All faculty must satisfy the requirements of a nationally recognized, industry-based occupational instructor certification process, where possible, and where such criteria are available.

B. Programs

1. Advisory Committees

- 1) Programs have established and functioning advisory committees that assist with program development, evaluation, and improvement.
- 2) Advisory committees shall be composed of local employers, industry partners, community members, appropriate agency representatives, and student representatives in numbers sufficient to best serve the interests of the program.
- 3) Advisory committees will have guidelines that define the roles and responsibilities of its members; at minimum, two regularly scheduled meetings where official minutes are kept; and an annual plan of work.

2. Technology

- 1) Programs utilize appropriate technology, not only for specific technical skill development, but also to enhance instruction.

3. Safety

- 1) All programs evidence appropriate campus, classroom, and laboratory safety procedures as an integral element of instruction.

4. Curriculum

- 1) Curriculum is contemporary in content, delivery, and application, and is competency based, preparing students for skill development and/or employment in related occupations.
- 2) All programs will use either standards from postsecondary accrediting agencies or existing, nationally recognized, industry based skill standards and occupational certificates, where available, as the basis for developing or upgrading competency based learning objectives, curricula, instructional methods, teaching materials, and worksite activities.

- 3) All programs will prepare students to satisfy the requirements of a nationally recognized, industry based occupational certification process, where such criteria are available. Where such criteria are not available, programs will prepare students to satisfy the employer knowledge and skill requirements assessed by related examinations.
- 4) All programs will provide students with the opportunity to take these examinations, or other evaluative methods, and receive certification, a degree, or passing grade corresponding to their course of study.

5. Partnerships

- 1) Institutions should seek to include and develop partnerships with employers, professional associations, and community based organizations that provide mutual benefit.
- 2) Partnerships with secondary programs include articulation agreements, dual credit, and/or coordination with secondary teachers, administrators, and counselors to ensure a smooth transition to postsecondary programs.

6. Work-based learning experiences

- 1) Students have the opportunity to participate in structured and supervised work-based experiences that complement classroom learning whenever possible.

7. Assessment

- 1) Students are assessed regularly to measure specific identified competencies; program completers, non-completers, and employers are assessed to measure program satisfaction.
- 2) Graduates who are seeking employment in the area for which they have trained are employed in occupations related to their training/instruction.

C. Processes

1. Financial Resources

- 1) Adequate financial resources are in place to support the needs of the program.

2. Physical Resources

- 1) Programs have adequate classroom and laboratory space; programs have appropriate equipment; programs have sufficient related instructional materials; a plan to regularly maintain currency of facilities and equipment is utilized.

3. Learning Resources

- 1) Libraries, learning centers, and intra-curricular opportunities are available to students to supplement and enhance classroom learning; students have reasonable access to learning resources.

4. Planning

- 1) An annual plan is created and implemented with the input of advisory committees; sufficient and appropriate data is gathered to aid the planning process.

5. Evaluation

- 1) Monitoring and evaluation are imbedded in the annual plan; evaluation is used to improve and validate programs; effective feedback mechanisms are in place for continuous improvement.

**Alaska's Future Workforce
Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint**

Adopted by
Alaska Human Resource Investment Council
(AHRIC)

December 12, 2000

Introduction

Purpose

Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint is a framework for strengthening vocational and technical education and training statewide. The *Blueprint* has been developed in response to specific requirements of Senate Bill 289, which was adopted by the State Legislature this year and became effective July 1, 2000.

One of the key legislative intents of Senate Bill 289 was to improve the ability of the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council (AHRIC) to efficiently and effectively serve as the state's primary planning and coordinating entity for vocational and technical education. Towards that end, AHRIC was mandated to:

“facilitate the development of a statewide policy for a coordinated and effective technical and vocational education training system in this state and, to the extent authorized by federal and state law, plan and coordinate federal, state, and local efforts in technical and vocational education programs.”

Adopted by the AHRIC on December 12, 2000, *Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint* will serve as the comprehensive guide for alignment of public policies and resource investments in Early Childhood Education — 12 and postsecondary vocational and technical education and training programs statewide.

Workforce Development Goals - State Unified Plan

Vocational and technical education and training is an integral part of Alaska's overall Workforce Investment System. The system is guided by the five-year *State Unified Plan, June 2000 to June 2005*, which addresses service provisions for a multitude of federally funded, state funded, and locally implemented programs for workforce development.

The *Blueprint* for vocational and technical education and training in Alaska is designed to promote the six primary goals for workforce development identified in the *State Unified Plan*:

Workforce Development Goals – State Unified Plan

- Strengthen the involvement of business, industry, and economic development to build Alaska's workforce.
- Ensure access to quality employment education, training and employment services statewide, particularly to rural areas and for the economically disadvantaged.
- Evaluate programs of the workforce investment system to optimize customer employability.
- Advocate for Alaska's human resource investment programs and promote continuous improvement.
- Promote the full integration of Alaskans with disabilities into all aspects of the workforce development system to put people with disabilities into good jobs.
- Strengthen the involvement and ability of Alaska's education system to develop Alaska's workforce.

Vocational and Technical Education and Training Challenges

Alaska is experiencing critical workforce, community and economic development challenges. This is evidenced by the combination in many regional economies of labor surpluses and the inability of businesses and industry to fill high-skill jobs with qualified Alaskans. Education and training programs available to address these challenges are too often seriously fragmented and underfunded. Immediate and decisive action is needed to align publicly supported education and training efforts with labor market needs, close skills gaps and position Alaskans for employment in good jobs statewide, especially in projected “hot occupations” with higher than average growth rates and estimated wages.

Mission and Guiding Principles for Vocational and Technical Education and Training

The mission of Alaska’s vocational and technical education and training system is to provide a fully prepared, ready-to-work, qualified workforce that meets the needs of Alaska’s businesses and industries. To successfully accomplish this mission, address current challenges, and promote Alaska’s primary workforce development goals, this *Blueprint* calls for the realignment and strengthening of public service delivery and funding for vocational and technical education and training, consistent with six guiding principles:

Guiding Principles for Alaska’s Vocational and Technical Education & Training System

Needs Driven. System is labor market driven, and responsive to interrelated workforce, community and regional economic development needs.

Accessible. System is expanded to provide greater access and opportunity in both rural and urban Alaska.

Interconnected. System uses coordinated programs and service delivery to promote progressive, lifelong occupational learning, skill transferability, credential portability, and worker mobility.

Accountable. System delivers quality services that are aligned with and responsive to current and emerging needs of core constituents—students, job seekers, employers, families and communities.

Collaborative Governance. System promotes collaborative state and local policies and partnerships to ensure a close fit between education and training, labor market demands, and the needs of constituents regionally and statewide.

Sustainable. System is “built to last” and supported by increased funding and sustainable investment policies.

Strategic Policies and Investments to Achieve Overall Goals

The *Blueprint* outlines proposed strategic policies and investments related to each of the six primary system components and guiding principles for vocational and technical education and training in Alaska. These are directed to advance Alaska’s two primary goals for publicly supported vocational and technical education and training:

- development of a coherent, well-coordinated system to promote and sustain lifelong occupational learning for all Alaskans;
- sustained development of qualified workers in sufficient numbers to meet employers’ needs, regionally and statewide.

Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint will serve as the comprehensive guide for alignment of public policies and resource investments in Early Childhood Education — 12 and postsecondary vocational and technical education and training programs statewide. As the state's primary planning and coordinating entity for vocational and technical education, AHRIC will be responsible to monitor performance and accountability. Monitoring efforts will be guided by core indicators and reporting requirements identified in the five-year *State Unified Plan* for workforce development, and by the six guiding principles addressed in this *Blueprint*.

COMPONENT 1: NEEDS DRIVEN

Guiding Principle

Alaska’s vocational and technical education and training system is labor market driven, and responsive to interrelated workforce, community and regional economic development needs.

- 1.A. Assess and quantify the need to add, revise or delete education and training programs, based on ongoing evaluation of Alaska and national industry trends, regional and statewide labor markets, and consultations with affected industries and businesses.
- 1.B. Align training investments with occupations appropriate to Alaska’s current and emerging labor markets, community and regional economic development needs.
- 1.C. Invest in vocational and technical education and training programs that are market-responsive and consistent with nationally recognized, industry-based skill standards and occupational certifications through expanded use of career pathways, business, labor and education partnerships, registered apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.

Career pathway — an integrated, multi-year sequence of career guidance, coursework, and work-based learning experiences that enables students to explore a variety of career choices and provides a context for learning (Source: U.S. Department of Education).

Business, labor and education partnerships — cooperative agreements between entities to share information, expertise, or provide services that benefit students and support system-building (Source: National School-to-Work Office). As used throughout the *Blueprint*, its synonyms include “business learning consortia”, “industry-led consortia”, and “business-led consortia”.

COMPONENT 2: ACCESSIBLE

Guiding Principle

Alaska's vocational and technical education and training system is expanded to provide greater access and opportunity in both rural and urban Alaska.

- 2.A. Invest in programs and facilities that are prioritized by their ability to provide increased access, capacity and strength to the workforce development system, particularly for rural Alaska, Alaskans economically disadvantaged, and Alaskans with disabilities.
- 2.B. Expand access to short-term secondary and postsecondary training and registered apprenticeships through investments in interactive technology, distance delivery, intensive seminars and correspondence programs.
- 2.C. Strengthen business, labor and education partnerships to provide rural students, out-of-school youth and young adults with expanded training choices linked to current and emerging labor markets, *good* jobs, and community and regional economic development needs.

A *good* job is described as one that has adequate pay, benefits and career advancement opportunities that can sustain an individual and his or her family economically without reliance on public subsidy.

Source: Alaska Unified Plan - For State Unified Plans Submitted under Section 501 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, State of Alaska for the period of June 2000 to June 2005

COMPONENT 3: INTERCONNECTED

Guiding Principle

Alaska’s vocational and technical education and training system uses coordinated programs and service delivery to promote progressive, lifelong occupational learning, skill transferability, credential portability, and worker mobility.

- 3.A. Integrate applied learning into education and training from early childhood education through postsecondary levels and lifelong learning.

Applied learning — hands-on learning and student activities that directly relate to real world work and other life experiences.

- 3.B. Provide guidance, support and funding to assist every school district to develop career pathway programs that include high quality career guidance components and vocational and technical skills attainment that bridge secondary and postsecondary schools and the workplace.

- 3.C. Establish standards to align skill development, assessment and attainment levels with labor market needs, and achieve nationally recognized, industry-based skill standards and occupational certifications.

- 3.D. Ensure that the State’s Quality Schools Initiative and all State Standards for Alaska Students are fully integrated into career and technical education programs, to result in students passing the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination and being prepared for employment or further training and education leading to employment.

- 3.E. Establish an interconnected Early Childhood Education — 16 workforce investment information system.

- 3.F. Develop new business, labor and education partnerships to assist with planning, education, training and recruitment, and to help promote system alignment.

- 3.G. Provide information, technical assistance, resources and incentives to form or grow career and technical student and professional organizations.

- 3.H. Develop strategies to identify, promote and implement local and national Best Practices.

Best Practices — exemplary services, methods, processes or approaches that have high potential for successful application by other organizations and in different settings.

COMPONENT 4: ACCOUNTABLE

Guiding Principle

Alaska’s vocational and technical education and training system delivers quality services that are aligned with and responsive to the needs of core constituents—students, job seekers, employers, families and communities.

- 4.A. Align education and training investments to build a statewide system that provides opportunity for all youth and adults to equip themselves with academic, work readiness, employability, occupational, computer and technical skills.
- 4.B. Adopt nationally recognized, industry-based skill standards and occupational certifications, as well as program and instructor certification procedures, for secondary and postsecondary occupational education and training.
- 4.C. Complete development of secondary and postsecondary Career and Technical Education Program Standards for Alaska.
- 4.D. Address professional development issues including supply, licensure and skills upgrades to meet demand levels for vocational education instructors and counselors.
- 4.E. Apply *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*, as adopted by the State Board of Education and Early Development, in response to diverse cultural needs statewide.
- 4.F. Standardize terminology, coding and data to achieve timely evaluation of program performance and effectiveness.
- 4.G. Link public resource investments to standards-based program performance.
- 4.H. Evaluate system-wide performance and effectiveness using the following aggregate measurements:
 - Place participants in further education or training, employment or military service.
 - Increase the number of jobs held by Alaskans.
 - Reduce unemployment and welfare dependence by economic region.
 - Gain income for Alaskans.
 - Increase the supply of workers possessing nationally recognized, industry-based skill standards and occupational certifications for *good* jobs in demand.
 - Retain skilled workers in vital Alaska industries.

COMPONENT 5: COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Guiding Principle

Alaska’s vocational and technical education and training system promotes collaborative state and local policies and partnerships to ensure a close fit between education and training, labor market demands, and the needs of constituents regionally and statewide.

- 5.A. Build cross membership, cooperative relations and systematic communications between the AHRIC, State Board of Education and Early Development, University of Alaska Board of Regents, Local Workforce Investment Boards, Local Education Agencies, tribal governments, Denali Commission, and key federal and state funding agencies.

Key agencies include U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.

- 5.B. Promote the alignment of education and training through direct planning by Local Workforce Investment Boards and Local Advisory Committees, Local Education Agencies and Local Vocational Advisory Committees, University Campus directors, and economic development organizations.
- 5.C. Strengthen and expand alignment and partnerships with the Alaska Native Coalition on Employment and Training (ANCET), Consortium for Alaska Native Higher Education (CANHE), and Alaska Native corporations and training organizations.
- 5.D. Promote the active collaboration of parents, career and technical student and professional organizations, educators and trainers, labor, businesses and industry in policy and investment planning, development, implementation and evaluation.
- 5.E. To the extent authorized by federal and state law, AHRIC will plan and coordinate federal, state and local vocational and technical education and training efforts, evaluate performance, and advise the Governor and Legislature on workforce development investments.

COMPONENT 6: SUSTAINABLE

Guiding Principle

Alaska’s vocational and technical education and training system is “built to last” and supported by increased funding and sustainable investment policies.

- 6.A. Increase funding, align existing resources and establish multi-year funding streams to achieve sustainable commitment and support to meet current and emerging workforce development needs and demand levels.
- 6.B. Maximize the performance and effectiveness of current programs and assets by increasing investments in professional staff, modern equipment, facility upgrades, and the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building services.
- 6.C. Establish funding structures and incentives that promote collaboration and coordination between K-16 education and training providers, businesses and labor.
- 6.D. Establish funding sources and allocation methods for timely response to specific workforce development and training needs.
- 6.E. Follow a continuous improvement process to assess the effectiveness of investment policies and strategies.

Continuous improvement process — ongoing assessment and application of incremental and breakthrough improvements in products, services, or processes.

Recommendations

Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint is designed to serve as the comprehensive guide for alignment of public policies and resource investments in Early Childhood Education — 12 and postsecondary vocational and technical education and training programs statewide.

The *Blueprint* has been developed with benefit of initial consultations and extensive feedback from diverse stakeholders statewide. Overall there has been strong, positive support for the strategic policies and investments addressed in the *Blueprint*. However, there is overriding concern that efforts to strengthen vocational and technical education and training will be seriously hampered unless two major constraints are addressed:

- insufficient funding in relation to workforce development needs and demand levels;
- lack of an integrated system for determining federal and state resource allocations across secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education and training programs.

Resolution of these two fundamental issues will require continuing consultation between key stakeholders and the state administration and legislature that is beyond the scope of the *Blueprint*. In some instances, there is simply not enough money currently available to meet basic needs. In other instances, enabling legislation would be required.

Seven recommendations are presented here for the purposes of establishing a baseline for continuing policy discussions with the state administration and legislature, and to document public input received during the *Blueprint's* development.

Recommendation 1

Increase funding for vocational and technical education and training in the areas of but not limited to:

- Early Childhood Education through postsecondary programs
- adult basic education
- employability skills education
- career pathway programs that include high quality career guidance components
- secondary-postsecondary dual credit, credential and certificate-granting programs
- tech-prep programs
- registered apprenticeships
- start-up support for business, labor and education partnerships. Such partnerships work to determine local demand levels in high skill – high wage occupations and develop strategies to supply qualified local workers to meet that demand.

Recommendation 2

Establish, fund and staff an organization, under the AHRIC, that is responsible for providing professional development, technical assistance and capacity-building services for development or expansion of secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education and training programs.

Recommendation 3

Under the AHRIC and in coordination with the University of Alaska Board of Regents and the State Board of Education and Early Development, establish an advisory state program and budget review process to promote alignment of secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education and training.

Recommendation 4

Under the AHRIC, establish a state clearinghouse for information and activities related to vocational and technical education and training. In order to improve coordination and consistency with the overall policy direction of the Workforce Development System, the clearinghouse will also be available, on request, to provide advisory information or reviews for grant applications.

Recommendation 5

Amend the state procurement code to provide bidder preferences and financial incentives for contractors who invest in community employment and training programs.

Recommendation 6

Establish a review body that is available through the AHRIC to evaluate proposals, consistent with the Workforce Development System, for public investment in new post-secondary regional training centers. A regional training center is defined as an institution that provides integrated vocational and work readiness skills training at the postsecondary level to trainees who may originate from communities co-located within a broad geographic area of the state.

Evaluations will be based on the extent to which proposals meet six evaluation criteria:

Evaluation Criterion 1: Program operations are consistent with statewide training policies outlined in *Alaska's Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint*, *State Unified Plan — June 2000 to June 2005*, *State Training and Employment Plan*, and the *Carl D. Perkins Plan*.

Evaluation Criterion 2: Curriculum leads progressively to, or results in, the attainment of nationally recognized, industry-based skill standards and occupational certifications.

Evaluation Criterion 3: Postsecondary programs meet all standards for authorization by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.

Evaluation Criterion 4: Sustainable demand is evidenced by (a) sufficient local or regional population base from which to draw a viable pool of trainees, and (b) direct correlation between the types of training to be offered and documented local and state labor market needs/employer partnerships.

Evaluation Criterion 5: Any proposed training facility or center will:
(a) serve multi-purpose facility needs and maximize use of existing infrastructure, (b) utilize a small permanent staff of certified instructors which can be supplemented by sharing staff with other programs, (c) be located in a community that can accommodate the full range of trainees' housing, transportation and other support needs, and (d) encourage alignment with secondary education entities.

Evaluation Criterion 6: On-going program and facility operations and maintenance are financially viable and sustainable as evidenced by concrete revenue streams.

Recommendation 7

Establish results-based performance measurements to evaluate the success of regional-serving alternative secondary schools that have both residential and vocational components. Use these results as a tool to indicate whether funding should be considered for other regional-serving alternative secondary schools that have both residential and vocational components.